

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please replace the claims, including all prior versions, with the listing of claims below.

### LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Withdrawn) A method for manufacturing an information storage system comprising:  
  
at least one read/write head comprising a transducer for information introduction and/or retrieval from the information storage medium; and an actuator supporting at least one read/write head for moving the transducer relative to the information storage medium;  
  
depositing a composite nickel coating on a non-magnetic substrate, the composite nickel coating including an electrolessly deposited nickel layer formed on a sputter deposited nickel layer,  
  
eliminating a subsequent polishing step, and  
  
depositing a magnetic recording layer on the composite nickel coating.
2. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein the sputter deposited nickel layer comprises nickel-phosphorus.
3. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein the electrolessly deposited nickel layer comprises nickel-phosphorus.
4. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein the sputter deposited nickel layer has a thickness in a range of about 10 Å to about 1000 Å.

5. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein the electrolessly deposited nickel layer has a thickness in a range of about 0.5 microns to about 10 microns.

6-12. (Canceled)

13. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the surface roughness (Ra) is an average of a 10 micron x 10 micron scan of a surface of the composite nickel coating by an atomic field microscopy.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the composite nickel coating has a surface roughness (Ra) less than about 10 Å.

16. (Currently amended) A magnetic recording medium comprising, in this order:

(a) a non-magnetic substrate,

(b) a composite nickel-containing coating comprising a sputter deposited nickel-containing layer comprising NiP and an electrolessly deposited nickel-containing layer, the composite nickel-containing coating having a bottom surface contacting the non-magnetic substrate and a top surface, and

(c) a magnetic recording layer on the top surface of the composite nickel-containing coating,

wherein the top surface of the composite nickel-containing coating is a non-polished surface and has a surface roughness (Ra) of less than about 10 Å ~~with the magnetic recording layer thereon~~, wherein the surface roughness (Ra) is averaged over the entire surface of the top surface of the composite nickel-containing coating.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently amended) A magnetic recording medium of claim 16, wherein the top surface of the composite nickel-containing directly contacts the magnetic layer.

19. (Previously presented) A magnetic recording medium of claim 16, wherein the non-magnetic substrate comprises glass or a glass-ceramic material.

20. (Currently amended) A magnetic recording medium of claim 16, the electrolessly deposited nickel layer-containing comprises NiP.

21. (Currently amended) A magnetic recording medium of claim 16, the ~~electrolessly sputter~~ deposited nickel-containing layer ~~comprises NiP~~ comprising about 15 atomic percent to about 30 atomic percent Ni.

22. (New) A magnetic recording medium of claim 16, wherein the sputter deposited layer has a thickness in a range of about 10 Å to about 1000 Å.

23. (New) A magnetic recording medium of claim 16, wherein the electrolessly deposited nickel-containing layer has a thickness in a range of about 0.5 microns to about 1 micron.